

HONORABLE ANDREW J. GUILFORD
STANDING PATENT RULES

These Standing Patent Rules are based largely on information obtained from over 100 patent practitioners and professors, a review of all the other local patent rules, and a review of related literature. These rules are drafted to respond to the needs of this community and to reduce transaction costs and increase procedural predictability. A primary goal was that the rules be outcome neutral and as concise as possible. While many lawyers and groups provided assistance through comments, special acknowledgment is given to Jonathan Rotter and Adam Hubbard.

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Title

These are the Standing Patent Rules for cases assigned to the Honorable Andrew J. Guilford. They should be cited as “S.P.R. ____.”

1.2 Effective Date

These Standing Patent Rules take effect on September 1, 2013, and apply in cases filed on or after that date. The Court may order that they also apply with appropriate modification to cases filed before that date.

1.3 Scope and Construction

These rules apply to all cases involving a claim of infringement, non-infringement, invalidity, or unenforceability of a utility patent. The Local Rules of this District shall also apply to such actions, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Standing Patent Rules. The Court will consider requests to opt out of these Standing Patent Rules, particularly when all parties agree the case involves less than \$2 million.

1.4 Modification of These Rules

The Court maintains the ability to modify or suspend these rules at any time. The Court will consider modifications to these rules suggested by the parties based on the circumstances of any particular case. Such party-suggested modifications shall, in most cases, be made at the scheduling conference, but may be made at other times upon a showing of good cause for such other time.

1.5 Confidentiality

Absent a Court order, discovery cannot be withheld on the basis of confidentiality. The Court’s Standing Protective Order shall govern discovery unless the Court enters a different protective order. The Standing Protective Order can be found on Judge Guilford’s “Frequently Asked Questions” webpage, available on the “Judges’ Procedures and Schedules” portion of the Central District of California’s website.

1.6 Relationship to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure

Except as provided in this paragraph or otherwise ordered, it shall not be a ground for objecting to discovery requests (such as interrogatories, document requests, requests for admission, or deposition questions), or declining to provide information otherwise required by Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(a)(1), that the discovery request or disclosure requirement is premature due to, or otherwise conflicts with, these Standing Patent Rules. But a party may object to the following categories of discovery requests (or decline to provide information in its initial disclosures under Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(a)(1)) on the ground of prematurity under these Standing Patent Rules: (1) requests seeking a party's claim construction position; (2) requests seeking from the patent claimant a comparison of the asserted claims and the accused apparatus, product, device, process, method, act, or other instrumentality (collectively "Accused Instrumentality"); (3) requests seeking from an accused infringer a comparison of the asserted claims and the prior art; (4) requests seeking from an accused infringer the identification of any advice of counsel or related documents.

2. PATENT DISCLOSURES, EARLY MEETING OF THE PARTIES, AND SCHEDULING CONFERENCE

2.1 Disclosure of Asserted Claims and Infringement Contentions

No later than 14 days after the Court issues an order setting a scheduling conference, a party asserting patent infringement shall serve on all parties a Disclosure of Asserted Claims and Infringement Contentions. Separately for each opposing party, the Disclosure of Asserted Claims and Infringement Contentions shall contain the information described as follows in S.P.R. 2.1.1 through 2.1.6.

2.1.1 Each claim of each patent in suit that is allegedly infringed by each opposing party, including for each claim the applicable statutory subsections of 35 U.S.C. § 271 asserted.

2.1.2 Separately for each asserted claim, each Accused Instrumentality. This identification shall be as specific as reasonably possible.

2.1.3 A chart identifying specifically where each limitation of each asserted claim is found within each Accused Instrumentality, including, for each limitation that such party contends is governed by 35 U.S.C. § 112(6)/(f), the identity of the structure(s), act(s), or material(s) in the Accused Instrumentality that performs the claimed function, and whether each limitation of each asserted claim is alleged to be literally present or present under the doctrine of equivalents in the Accused Instrumentality.

2.1.4 For any patent that claims priority to an earlier application, the priority date allegedly applicable to each asserted claim.

2.1.5 If a party claiming patent infringement wishes to preserve the right to rely, for any purpose, on the assertion that its own apparatus, product, device, process, method, act, or other instrumentality practices the claimed invention, the party shall identify, separately for each asserted claim, each such apparatus, product, device, process, method, act, or other instrumentality that incorporates or reflects that particular claim.

2.1.6 If a party claiming patent infringement alleges willful infringement, the basis for such allegation.

2.2 Document Production Accompanying Disclosure

With the Disclosure of Asserted Claims and Infringement Contentions, the party claiming patent infringement shall produce or make available for inspection and photocopying the items described as follows in S.P.R. 2.2.1 through 2.2.3, identifying the documents corresponding to each category by production number.

2.2.1 A copy of the file history for each patent in suit.

2.2.2 All documents evidencing ownership of the patent rights by the party asserting patent infringement.

2.2.3 If a party identifies instrumentalities under S.P.R. 2.1.5, documents sufficient to show the operation of any aspects or elements of such instrumentalities the patent claimant relies upon as embodying any asserted claims.

2.3 Early Meeting of the Parties

No later than 14 days after the service of the materials required by S.P.R. 2.1 and 2.2, counsel for the parties shall exchange Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(a)(1)(A) initial disclosures and meet in person or telephonically to prepare for the scheduling conference and prepare the joint Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(f) report. Both sides have the duty to schedule the meeting and comply with this paragraph, with plaintiff taking the lead. The parties should consider, where applicable, consolidation of related cases, including for trial, and transfer for pretrial purposes through the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation. The parties should consider the Federal Circuit Advisory Committee's Model Order Limiting Excess Patent Claims and Prior Art. The Court welcomes, where relevant, references to the "policy levers" discussed in Burk & Lemley, The Patent Crisis. The parties should discuss ADR timing, recognizing that settlement decisions, like other business decisions, are often made with incomplete information. Where necessary in multi-defendant cases and upon a showing of good cause, counsel may apply for a reasonable extension of time to hold the early meeting of the parties. The parties shall submit their joint Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(f) report no later than 14 days after the early meeting of the parties.

2.4 Scheduling Conference

A scheduling conference will be held on the date set by the Court. Usually, each side will have five minutes to present any potentially dispositive issues it wishes to bring to the Court's

attention and to discuss its position on disputed scheduling issues. The presentations are intended to allow the Court to make informed decisions on scheduling and potential modifications of these rules. At the scheduling conference, the Court will issue a scheduling order.

2.5 Invalidity Contentions

No later than 14 days after the scheduling conference, each party opposing a claim of patent infringement shall serve on all parties Invalidity Contentions containing the information described as follows in S.P.R. 2.5.1 through 2.5.4.

2.5.1 The identity of each item of prior art that allegedly anticipates each asserted claim or renders it obvious. Each prior art patent shall be identified by its number, country of origin, and date of issue. Each prior art publication shall be identified by its title, date of publication, author, and publisher. Prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)/(a) shall be identified by specifying the item offered for sale or publicly used or known, the date the offer or use took place or the information became known, and the identity of the person or entity which made the use or which made and received the offer, or the person or entity which made the information known or to whom it was made known. Prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(f), or other claim of derivation, shall be identified by providing the name of the person(s) from whom and the circumstances under which the invention or any part of it was derived. Prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(g) shall be identified by providing the identities of the person(s) or entities involved in and the circumstances surrounding the making of the invention before the patent applicant(s).

2.5.2 Whether each item of prior art anticipates each asserted claim or renders it obvious. If obviousness is alleged, an explanation of why the prior art renders the asserted claim obvious, including an identification of any combinations of prior art showing obviousness.

2.5.3 A chart identifying where specifically in each alleged item of prior art each limitation of each asserted claim is found, including for each limitation that such party contends is governed by 35 U.S.C. § 112(6)/(f), the identity of the structure(s), act(s), or material(s) in each item of prior art that performs the claimed function.

2.5.4 Any grounds of invalidity based on 35 U.S.C. § 101, indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. § 112(2)/(b), or enablement or written description under 35 U.S.C. § 112(1)/(a) of any of the asserted claims.

2.6 Document Production Accompanying Invalidity Contentions

With the Invalidity Contentions, the party opposing a claim of patent infringement shall produce or make available for inspection and copying the items described as follows in S.P.R. 2.6.1 through 2.6.2, identifying the documents corresponding to each category by production number.

2.6.1 Source code, specifications, schematics, flow charts, artwork, formulas, or other documentation sufficient to show the operation of any aspects or elements of an Accused Instrumentality identified by the patent claimant's S.P.R. 2.1.3 chart.

2.6.2 A copy or sample of the prior art identified under S.P.R. 2.5.1 that does not appear in the file history of the patent(s) at issue. To the extent any such item is not in English, an English translation of the portion relied upon shall be produced.

2.7 Disclosure Requirement in Patent Cases for Declaratory Judgment of Invalidity Where No Claim of Infringement Has Been Made

In all cases where a party files a complaint or other pleading seeking a declaratory judgment that a patent is invalid, S.P.R. 2.1 and 2.2 shall not apply unless and until a claim for patent infringement is made, and the party asserting patent infringement shall have 28 days (instead of 14 days) after the order setting the scheduling conference to make its S.P.R. 2.1 and 2.2 disclosures. If the defendant does not assert a claim for patent infringement in its answer to the complaint, the party seeking a declaratory judgment of invalidity shall serve upon each opposing party its S.P.R. 2.5 and 2.6 disclosures no later than 14 days after the order setting the scheduling conference.

3. CLAIM CONSTRUCTION

3.1 Exchange of Proposed Terms for Construction

No later than 14 days after the S.P.R. 2.5 and 2.6 disclosures, each party shall serve on each other party a list of claim terms the party contends should be construed by the Court, and identify any claim term the party contends should be governed by 35 U.S.C. § 112(6)/(f). The parties shall then work to limit the terms in dispute by narrowing or resolving differences, and to jointly identify the 10 terms likely to be most significant to the case.

3.2 Exchange of Claim Constructions and Extrinsic Evidence

No later than 14 days after the exchange of the S.P.R. 3.1 lists, the parties shall simultaneously exchange proposed constructions of each term identified by either party for claim construction. Each such construction shall also, for each term that any party contends is governed by 35 U.S.C. § 112(6)/(f), identify the structure(s), act(s), or material(s) corresponding to that term's function. At the same time the parties exchange their constructions, each party shall also identify all references from the specification or prosecution history that support its proposed construction and designate any supporting extrinsic evidence including, without limitation, dictionary definitions, citations to learned treatises and prior art, and testimony of percipient and expert witnesses. Extrinsic evidence shall be identified by production number and by producing a copy if not previously produced. For any supporting witness, percipient or expert, the identifying party shall also provide a declaration containing that witness' testimony regarding claim construction. The parties shall then meet and confer to narrow the issues and finalize preparation of a Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement.

3.3 Completion of Claim Construction Discovery

No later than 28 days after service of the material required by S.P.R. 3.2, the parties shall complete all discovery desired for claim construction, including any depositions of fact and expert witnesses regarding claim construction.

3.4 Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement

No later than seven days after the completion of claim construction discovery, the parties shall complete and file a Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement. The Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement shall contain the information described as follows in S.P.R. 3.4.1 through 3.4.5.

3.4.1 The parties' agreed constructions.

3.4.2 A chart showing each party's proposed construction of each disputed term, together with an identification of all references from the specification or prosecution history that support that construction, and an identification of any extrinsic evidence supporting its proposed construction or undermining any other party's proposed construction, including, but not limited to, dictionary definitions, citations to learned treatises and prior art, and testimony of percipient and expert witnesses.

3.4.3 An identification of up to 10 terms whose construction will be most significant to the case. If the parties cannot agree on the 10 most significant terms, the parties shall identify the ones they agree are most significant and then they may evenly divide the remainder. While the Court may in its discretion construe more than 10 terms, the total terms identified by all parties as most significant cannot exceed 10. For example, in a case involving two parties, if the parties agree upon the identification of five terms as most significant, each may only identify two additional terms as most significant. A failure to make a good faith effort to narrow the instances of disputed terms or otherwise participate in the meet and confer process of any of the provisions in S.P.R. 3 may expose counsel to sanctions, including under 28 U.S.C. § 1927.

3.4.4 Whether the party believes it will need more than 45 minutes total for all its presentation at the claim construction hearing, and if so, how much time, and why more time is necessary.

3.4.5 Whether any party proposes to call one or more witnesses at the claim construction hearing, the identity of each such witness, and for each witness, a summary of the testimony including, for any expert, each opinion to be offered on claim construction. For expert witnesses, the Court may employ the "hot tub" technique.

3.5 Claim Construction Briefs

No later than seven days after they file the Joint Claim Construction and Prehearing Statement, the parties shall file simultaneous opening claim construction briefs of not more than 25 pages.

Not later than 14 days after the opening briefs, the parties shall file simultaneous responsive briefs of not more than 10 pages. With its responsive brief, each party shall submit any presentation material (such as slide decks) it wishes to use at the claim construction hearing, and may submit a technology tutorial of no more than 20 minutes in length on CD-ROM, DVD, or USB thumb drive. At the claim construction hearing, the Court will not accept, and will not permit the parties to use, any presentation material that was not submitted with the briefing. If a party wishes to use a physical exhibit at the claim construction hearing, it shall file with its responsive brief photographs of the physical exhibit along with a statement that it intends to use the physical exhibit at the hearing. Concurrently with the filing of the responsive briefs, the parties shall jointly lodge with the Court the material described as follows in S.P.R. 3.5.1 through 3.5.3.

3.5.1 A chart in Word or WordPerfect format providing the parties' proposed constructions of each disputed term, with a column for the Court's construction.

3.5.2 An annotated copy of the certified file history for each asserted patent. Each file history shall be printed double-sided, indexed, tabbed, and compiled in a 3-ring binder. Each office action, response, filing, or other communication shall be given a separate tab, with the date of each clearly designated. Portions of the file history relied upon by the patentee for claim construction shall be highlighted in yellow. Portions of the file history relied upon by the accused infringer(s) shall be highlighted in blue. Portions of the file history relied upon by both sides shall be highlighted in green.

3.5.3 An electronic copy of each file history on a CD-ROM, DVD, or USB thumb drive. Each file history shall be a single PDF file with bookmarks corresponding to the tabs on the paper copy, and containing the highlighting present on the paper copy.

3.6 Claim Construction Hearing

Subject to the Court's calendar, approximately 119 days (17 weeks) after the scheduling conference, the Court will conduct a claim construction hearing. Each side shall have 45 minutes for its presentation, subject to enlargement at the Court's discretion. Again, parties may not use at the hearing any presentation material they did not previously submit in accordance with S.P.R. 3.5.

4. FINAL CONTENTIONS, EXPERT REPORTS, DISCLOSURE OF ADVICE OF COUNSEL, AND DISPOSITIVE MOTION DEADLINE

4.1 Final Infringement Contentions and Expert Reports

No later than 28 days after the Court construes the claims, the party claiming patent infringement shall serve the information described as follows in S.P.R. 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. The deadlines provided in this rule do not excuse the requirement to supplement disclosures and discovery responses promptly. If a party receiving Final Infringement Contentions believes that amendments were made without good cause, it may move the Court to strike them.

4.1.1 All Rule 26 expert reports on issues where the party claiming patent infringement bears the burden of proof.

4.1.2 A statement that its S.P.R. 2.1 contentions are its Final Infringement Contentions, or in the alternative, Final Infringement Contentions that amend its S.P.R. 2.1 contentions. A party serving Final Infringement Contentions that amend its prior contentions shall also provide a redline against its prior contentions and a statement of reasons for each amendment. Amendments are subject to a good cause standard but do not require prior Court approval where they are made due to a claim construction by the Court different from that proposed by the party seeking amendment, or recent discovery of nonpublic information about the Accused Instrumentality that was not discovered, despite diligent efforts, before the service of the Infringement Contentions.

4.2 Final Invalidity Contentions and Expert Reports

No later than 28 days after service of the Final Infringement Contentions, the party opposing a claim of patent infringement shall serve the information described as follows in S.P.R. 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. The deadlines provided in this rule do not excuse the requirement to supplement disclosures and discovery responses promptly. If a party receiving Final Invalidity Contentions believes that amendments were made without good cause, it may move the Court to strike them.

4.2.1 All Rule 26 expert reports on issues where the party opposing a claim of patent infringement bears the burden of proof.

4.2.2 A statement that its S.P.R. 2.5 contentions are its Final Invalidity Contentions, or in the alternative, Final Invalidity Contentions that amend its S.P.R. 2.5 contentions. A party serving Final Invalidity Contentions that amend its prior contentions shall also provide a redline against its prior contentions and a statement of reasons for each amendment. Amendments are subject to a good cause standard but do not require prior Court approval where they are made due to a claim construction by the Court different from that proposed by the party seeking amendment, or recent discovery of material prior art that was not discovered, despite diligent efforts, before the service of the Invalidity Contentions.

4.3 Rebuttal Expert Reports and Close of Discovery

Rebuttal expert reports are due no later than 28 days after service of the respective S.P.R. 4.1 and 4.2 reports. Discovery closes 28 days after service of the latest set of rebuttal reports. This will typically be approximately 119 days (17 weeks) after the claim construction hearing. Amendments to or supplementation of expert reports after Standing Patent Rules deadlines are presumptively prejudicial and shall not be allowed absent prior leave of court upon a showing of good cause that the amendment or supplementation could not reasonably have been made earlier and that the opposing party is not unfairly prejudiced.

4.4 Advice of Counsel

No later than 28 days after service by the Court of its claim construction ruling, each party relying upon advice of counsel as part of a patent-related claim or defense for any reason shall produce the information described as follows in S.P.R. 4.4.1 through 4.4.3. A party not complying with this rule shall not be permitted to rely on advice of counsel for any purpose absent a stipulation of all parties or order of the Court.

4.4.1 Any written advice and related documents for which the attorney-client and work-product protection have been waived.

4.4.2 A written summary of any oral advice and related documents for which the attorney-client and work-product protection have been waived.

4.4.3 A privilege log identifying any other documents, except those authored by counsel acting solely as trial counsel, relating to the subject matter of the advice that the party is withholding on the grounds of attorney-client privilege or work-product protection.

4.5 Final Day for Filing Dispositive Motions

All dispositive motions shall be filed no later than 28 days after the close of discovery.

5. TRIAL

5.1 Standard Trial Procedures

Generally, trial procedure is governed by Judge Guilford's Scheduling Order Specifying Procedures and the Central District of California's Local Rules.

5.2 Other Possible Trial Procedures

The Court is open to creative trial procedures, such as imposing time limits, allowing short statements introducing each witness's testimony before examination, allowing questions from the jury, and giving the jury a full set of instructions before the presentation of evidence. The Court reminds parties that trial estimates affect juries. The Court strongly encourages the parties to give young lawyers the chance to examine witnesses and fully participate in trial (and throughout the litigation!).

5.3 Hypothetically Negotiate with Care

A legally and methodologically sound damages report is far more valuable to you than a more aggressive report that is subject to exclusion under *Daubert*. Requests for a second bite at the apple may be met with a citation to S.P.R. 5.3.